

SITUATION REPORT NO. 1
INCIDENT NO. 2003-104
DATE: September 26, 2003 TIME: 2:00 pm

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck, N.D. 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** **Extreme Dry Conditions** –Southwestern and south central North Dakota producers report extremely dry conditions, high temperatures and small amounts of rain are contributing to crop and forage losses and adverse economic effects on agribusiness.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. **DAMAGES:** On September 17, when Governor John Hoeven outlined the state's response to the dry conditions, he stated that municipalities were beginning to feel impacts of drought. Water supplies in some communities were endangered by dry conditions, notably communities such as Parshall that rely on Lake Sakakawea for fresh water. If water levels on Sakakawea drop below 1,815 feet, Parshall will have significant problems regarding both the quantity and the quality of its water supply. A long-term forecast by the U.S. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) indicated the Lake Sakakawea will likely reach 1,816.9 feet by the end February 2004. The lowest predicted level is 1,814.9 feet and the highest level is 1,819.5 feet. State officials have requested assistance from USACE representatives to work with Parshall officials to address this situation.

Additionally officials for the N.D. Game and Fish and N.D. Parks and Recreation Departments indicated receding shorelines throughout North Dakota will limit waterfowl opportunities. Most lakes shores are down two to five feet.

For the week ending September 15, officials for the North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), indicated the recent rain increased the topsoil moisture supplies. However, the rain came too late to benefit the late season crops. Current topsoil moisture supplies were rated 24 percent very short, 43 percent short, 33 percent adequate and zero percent surplus. This compares to 16 percent very short, 29 percent short, 52 percent adequate and three percent surplus last year. USDA reports showed pasture condition ratings continued to decline due to hot, dry conditions. They were rated 58 percent very poor to poor compared with 56 percent the previous week and 57 percent last year. Stockwater supplies were rated 17 percent very short, 33 percent short, 50 percent adequate and zero percent surplus compared to 20 percent very short, 22 percent short, 56 percent adequate and two percent surplus last year.

On September 10, Sioux County's Emergency Manager notified the State Operations Center that drought conditions are causing crop and pasture land damage.

On September 2, all of North Dakota remained in at least the abnormally dry category, according to the Drought Monitor by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Most of western and central North Dakota saw an increase of at least one drought classification. Moderate drought conditions expanded to include more of southwest and south central area and the southern tier of these counties moved up into the severe drought classification.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Agencies monitoring dry conditions include county extension service, fire departments, dispatch centers, law enforcement, county and city maintenance crews, park boards, public works county officials and emergency management officials.

STATE: Agencies involved in monitoring the extreme dry conditions reports include the Governor's Office, the State Fire Marshal's Office, the N.D. Division of Emergency Management (DEM), the N.D. Forest Service, the N.D. Game and Fish Department, the N.D. Agricultural Commission, the N.D. State Water Commission, and the Office of Management Budget.

FEDERAL: Agencies providing periodic reports include the National Weather Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the USACE.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: No volunteer activities have been reported.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: On September 19, Governor Hoeven provided an aerial tour of sections of the Missouri River, Sakakawea and Oahe Lake for the USACE's new Northwest Division Commander and the Omaha District commander. The tour revealed a reduced numbers of boats on Lake Sakakawea; boat ramps and cabins distant from the shoreline of the lake; compromised fish spawning habitat; and excessive shoreline weeds. The water level at Lake Oahe is particularly low. On September 24, Hoeven plans to attend a summit of Missouri River governors, USACE officials and representatives of other groups interested in river management. The following day, he will meet with members of Friends of Lake Sakakawea at the North Dakota State Capitol.

On September 17, Governor Hoeven outlined a broad strategy to respond to extreme dry conditions this season in some parts of the state, citing the need to address the impact of drought on agriculture, public water supplies and the Fire Danger Index.

On September 15, Chairs of the Drought Mitigation Task Force met at the State Operations Center to discuss the extreme dry conditions and the fire danger within North Dakota.

Sioux County Commissioners issued a Disaster Declaration on September 8, citing severe drought conditions affecting crop failure, lack of adequate feed and supplies for livestock and adverse economic effects on residents.

Grant County Commissioners issued an Emergency Declaration on August 27, citing local reports of feed and water shortages for livestock, crop failures, water problems, fire danger and adverse economic effects on the county's agribusiness.

On August 26, Governor Hoeven requested that the USDA complete an assessment of agriculture production to document crop losses. Governor Hoeven stated that crop conditions and crop loss reports, as well as weather data provided by local and state officials throughout North Dakota for this growing season, have indicated a loss of crop production and quality in varying degree due to a multitude of perils including, but not limited to: flooding, ground saturation, storms, wind, tornadoes, high humidity, dry conditions and severe temperatures. This was the first step in making a request for a secretarial disaster declaration from the USDA for counties suffering crop or forage losses due to drought. Preliminary results suggest that a number of counties will qualify in the southwestern part of the state, particularly where late season crops are affected. The assessment is scheduled to be completed by mid-October.

The N.D. State Water Commission has allocated \$200,000 to fund the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Project Assistance Program. As of August 26, 79 livestock producers have been reimbursed \$139,582.00 for an average reimbursement of \$1,767.00 per producer. Approximately 60 applications are pending reimbursement. Approximately two-thirds of the completed projects have been for drilling new wells, one-fourth for developing water table or spring fed dugouts, with the remainder of the projects being extensions from rural water pipelines systems.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: Local officials have requested that state officials pursue USDA assistance for producers impacted by dry conditions.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No additional outside help has been reported.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>

Douglas C. Friez, State Director